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SUBJECT: SIERRA LEONE: TALKING POINTS FOR JULY 16 UNSC
DEBATE

¶1. USUN may draw from the talking points in para 3 for the July 16 UN Security Council private meeting on the Special Court for Sierra Leone. End action request.

¶2. Background:

Since 2002, the USG has been the largest financial contributor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Including the FY2009 anticipated contribution of \$9 million, the USG will have paid a total of \$69.4 million since the SCSL's inception. Our FY2010 request to the Congress is \$7 million.

The SCSL was created by agreement between the United Nations (UN) and the Government of Sierra Leone to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since November 30, ¶1996. The Court opened in 2002 at the court facility in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

The SCSL is considered a "hybrid" international criminal tribunal. It was not imposed on Sierra Leone by the international community but instead created through a partnership between the UN and the Sierra Leonean government. It is primarily located in Sierra Leone, and staffed by a mix of international and Sierra Leonean personnel. The Court's jurisdiction includes both international and Sierra Leonean law. Outreach efforts to involve the people of Sierra Leone in the Court's work have been a priority since the Court's inception.

¶3. Begin points:

-- The United States would like to thank the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), Justice Renate Winter, and the Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp, for briefing the Security Council on their assessments on the work of the Court, and for the achievements of the Court to date. Their briefings today come at a critical juncture in the Court's work. As the Special Court completes the final phase of its mandate, the focus will soon shift to resolving outstanding questions concerning SCSL residual issues. The successful completion of the Court's work and the establishment of a viable and successful residual mechanism remains a top priority for the United States.

-- The United States was instrumental in the establishment of the SCSL and has been the largest financial supporter of the Court. To date, the United States has contributed over \$60 million to the Court since its inception in 2002. The United States welcomes the broad financial support that the SCSL has enjoyed in the past. The United States encourages all Governments to support the SCSL, ensuring that justice will be served, that impunity will not be tolerated and that achievements of accountability, peace, and security for Sierra Leone and for the region can be sustained into the future.

-- The Special Court has achieved great success in bringing to justice those who were most responsible for the serious violations of international humanitarian and Sierra Leonean

law committed in Sierra Leone. This year saw the successful conviction and sentencing of the accused in the Revolutionary United Front case. And this week the whole world is watching, as Charles Taylor begins to present his defense in The Hague. The Charles Taylor case sends a message to all that even heads of State will be held accountable for their violations of international humanitarian law.

-- The Government of Sierra Leone has been a strong and committed partner in the work of the Special Court, and we look forward to seeing that process and partnership through to a timely completion. The expected end of the Court,s work in 2011 will effectively close this chapter in Sierra Leonean history, the international community will shift its focus to supporting Sierra Leone's ongoing, long-term social and economic development. Until this time, however, continued efforts must be made to effect the Court,s closing and fulfill its mandate to buttress Sierra Leone,s peace and stability.

-- The United States has been happy to serve on the SCSL Management Committee, and we commend the work of the Canadian chair. We also would like to thank the SCSL staff for its help in evaluating options for a residual mechanism and applaud its efforts to reduce costs and improve efficiency in the Court,s operations. The United States remains committed to an efficient, cost-effective, and successful residual mechanism.

-- We again thank the President, Prosecutor, Acting Registrar, and their staffs, for their work to fulfill the Special Court,s mandate. The Court has made an important contribution to the long-term peace and security in Sierra Leone and it has broken new ground in the field of International Criminal Law. The Special Court for Sierra Leone has created a powerful legacy in the fight against impunity and brought justice to the people of Sierra Leone.

End points.
CLINTON